



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



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### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT -MEDIA ASSISTANCE REQUESTED-**

## **Methane Found in Private Wells on Huckaby Road**

(Baton Rouge) – Recent investigations conducted on three private wells by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) concluded that the water from these wells contains methane. The investigations were conducted on Huckaby Road between the towns of Gilliam and Vivian. Methane is not known to cause health problems as a result of eating, drinking, or bathing with water containing the gas. However, DEQ officials are urging owners of water wells containing methane to become aware of the possible dangers associated with the gas.

The presence of methane is usually signaled by unusual effervescence or other gaseous quality in the water. Though the risk is probably very small, one potential danger is the risk of fire and/or explosion. Another risk is the possibility of suffocation if accumulation occurs in a closed area without ventilation.

DEQ officials report that the findings are inconsistent with a spill or leak from industrial or oil activity, or a leak from a natural gas pipeline. This is because the analysis shows that methane is the only flammable gas present in the water, while there are none of the other constituents normally associated with underground blowouts of drilling wells or petroleum spills.

DEQ officials believe that the methane gas found in the drinking water wells originates naturally from the lignite coal beds of the Carrizo-Wilcox Group Aquifer, the geologic section of ground the water wells along Huckaby Road are drilled into. Lignite coal is a form of low-grade coal that is commonly found in the Wilcox Group, the same geologic unit that is being mined for lignite in the Dolet Hills area of Louisiana. Methane gas, frequently associated with the coal beds, is believed to have migrated into the groundwater, and has found its way into wells that produce this groundwater.

Area residents noticing gaseous activity in their well water may contact an expert on water well drilling and/or water treating for advice on remedy options. Water well drilling and repair persons contacted by DEQ indicated that the condition may be improved by using precautionary techniques during installation of a new well. Another suggestion is to have existing water well systems retrofitted by installing equipment on the surface to help remove the methane gas from the water.

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